United Nations A/73/259

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 July 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Item 104 of the provisional agenda*
Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

At its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters dealt with the following substantive items: strategic priorities for the Secretary-General on disarmament and non-proliferation; and current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament. Consideration of those topics informed the development of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, entitled "Securing Our Common Future". The work of the Board, which began in January 2018, was part of a multi-step process that included consultations with Member States, academia and non-governmental organizations.

The Board expressed full and unreserved support for the Agenda and commended the Secretary-General for setting out a clear and strategic path for addressing current challenges and defending gains made in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Board commended the Secretary-General for choosing to launch the Agenda at an institution of higher learning, thus speaking to the role of young people in disarmament efforts.

The Board praised the Agenda for being comprehensive and balanced, with a focus on reducing and eliminating the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction ("Disarmament to save humanity"), alleviating and mitigating the devastating harm to civilians caused by weapons designed for the battlefield ("Disarmament that saves lives"), and calling for vigilance concerning new and emerging technologies that bring benefits but also risks to the security of future generations ("Disarmament for future generations"). The Board noted that the broad scope of the Agenda addressed the concerns of all Member States, no matter their disarmament and non-proliferation priorities.

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In its deliberations on "Disarmament to save humanity", concerning weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons, the Board reaffirmed that nuclear weapons posed a continuing existential threat to the world. States must work together to take specific and irreversible steps to prepare for a world free of nuclear weapons. That includes reinvigorating global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes; making the nuclear test ban permanent; developing approaches for nuclear disarmament verification; and ending the production of fissile material for use in weapons. The Board also strongly welcomed the emphasis of the Agenda on dialogue and actions to reduce the risk of any use of nuclear weapons, within the Agenda's overall goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Board emphasized the importance of the upcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It welcomed the Secretary-General's readiness, as affirmed in the Agenda, to use his good offices with all States parties to contribute to a successful outcome. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to encouraging wider dialogue among States to support the Agenda's goals in that area.

The Board further affirmed the need to halt any use of chemical weapons by ensuring accountability and ending impunity.

The Board also highlighted that preventing the emergence and potential deployment of new and destabilizing strategic weapons, including in outer space, remained vital for the preservation of international stability.

In its deliberations on "Disarmament that saves lives", the Board noted that armed conflicts using conventional weapons were growing more deadly, destructive and complex, not only because of the overaccumulation and wide availability of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, but also because of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and improvised explosive devices, as well as the emergence of new technologies, such as armed drones.

The Board welcomed the assessment in the Agenda that international approaches to regulate arms needed to be brought in line with the magnitude of those problems and integrated into broader work for prevention and sustainable development. Furthermore, it agreed with the findings that a new approach was required to support action at the country level to end the illicit trade in small arms and their ammunition; that enhanced implementation of measures to ensure the security and physical protection of excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles was needed; and that new cooperation and dialogue must be fostered to reduce military spending and build confidence among States.

The Board considered the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas, which was identified as a leading concern in the Agenda. Weapons designed for use in open battlefields (such as artillery, rockets and mortars, large air-dropped bombs and surface-to-surface ballistic missiles) are increasingly being used in populated areas, which is having a devastating effect on civilian populations and infrastructure and has become a staggering humanitarian problem. The Board noted that, despite restraints proscribed by international humanitarian law, the impact of explosive weapons on civilians had grown substantially.

On the matter of "Disarmament for future generations", in which emerging means and methods of warfare were examined, the Board noted that, while technology provided overwhelming benefits, new technologies in the area of weapons posed challenges to existing legal, humanitarian and ethical norms, non-proliferation, international stability, and peace and security. Furthermore, in the face of the growing automation of weaponry, new measures were necessary to ensure that humans always maintained control over the use of force. A culture of accountability and adherence to

norms, rules and principles must be fostered to ensure responsible behaviour in cyberspace, and additional steps needed to be taken to encourage responsible innovation by industry, engineers and scientists.

Lastly, on the issue of "Strengthening partnerships for disarmament", the Board noted that disarmament initiatives had been most successful when they involved effective partnerships between Governments, the expert community, the private sector and civil society. The existing multilateral disarmament institutions needed to be reinvigorated and better utilized, both through increased political will and by improving the coordination and integration of expertise into their work. More education and training opportunities should be provided to empower women and young people to be a force for change and disarmament. Experts and representatives of industry and civil society must also be included and integrated more effectively into United Nations efforts for disarmament.

As the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Advisory Board welcomed and endorsed the vision of the new Director for the Institute as a responsive provider of knowledge, information, dialogue and policy advice to Member States, the disarmament expert community and United Nations entities. In particular, the Board welcomed the emphasis that the Institute was placing on contributing to the implementation of the Agenda.

The Board approved the report of the Director on the activities of the Institute for the period from January 2017 to May 2018 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2018 and 2019. The Board considered the report of the independent third-party assessment outlining a sustainable and stable funding structure and operating model as required to achieve the mandate and objectives of the Institute. The Board took note of the professional and comprehensive nature of the assessment and endorsed its overall findings. In the view of the Board, the assessment confirmed the Board's long-standing position on the importance of ensuring that the Institute has adequate operating capacity and resources to carry out its mandate in a sustainable, impartial and inclusive manner.

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its sixty-ninth session in Geneva from 24 to 26 January 2018 and its seventieth session in New York from 27 to 29 June 2018. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 (O). The report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was approved by the Advisory Board, in its capacity as the Institute's Board of Trustees, and has been submitted in document A/73/256.

2. Vladimir Drobnjak (Croatia) presided over both sessions of the Advisory Board in 2018.

II. Substantive discussions and recommendations

3. At its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, the Advisory Board dealt with the following substantive items: strategic priorities for the Secretary-General on disarmament and non-proliferation; and current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament. Consideration of those topics informed the development of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, entitled "Securing Our Common Future". The work of the Board, which began in January 2018, was part of a multi-step process that included consultations with Member States, academia and non-governmental organizations.

4. The Agenda was unveiled on 24 May 2018 at the University of Geneva in a major policy speech by the Secretary-General. It contains three major pillars: "Disarmament to save humanity", in which a common path is proposed for the elimination of nuclear weapons, restoring respect for shared norms against the use of other weapons of mass destruction and preventing the emergence of a new arms race; "Disarmament that saves lives", to mitigate the devastating impact on civilians resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, focusing on assistance to States to reduce excessive stockpiles of conventional arms and end illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons; and "Disarmament for future generations", concerning the challenges posed by autonomous weapons, artificial intelligence and cyberthreats. In the Agenda, the Secretary-General also encourages building and strengthening partnerships with Governments, the expert community and civil society, with a particular focus on empowering young people and creating training and educational opportunities. He has also paid particular attention to the gendered impact of arms.

5. Addressing the seventieth session of the Board, the Secretary-General thanked the members for providing vital initial inputs into the development of the Agenda. The Secretary-General asked the Board to focus on strategies for implementing the Agenda and to tackle three main questions: how to mobilize and ensure the support of Member States for the way forward, especially in the current difficult international climate; how to ensure that actions by the United Nations system are coordinated with the work of Member States in the areas of disarmament, development and humanitarian affairs; and how to build effective partnerships with experts, industry, civil society stakeholders, academia and the broader public.

6. The Board heard presentations from United Nations staff on specific issues and discussed the various topics with a view to developing practical and concrete suggestions and recommendations that focus on implementing the action points contained in the Agenda.

A. General assessment of the Agenda for Disarmament

7. The Board expressed full and unreserved support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and commended him for setting out a clear and strategic path for addressing current challenges and defending gains made in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

8. The Board believed that the Agenda was comprehensive and balanced, with its focus on reducing and eliminating the threats posed by nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction ("Disarmament to save humanity") and alleviating and mitigating the devastating harm to civilians caused by conventional weapons ("Disarmament that saves lives"), and its call for vigilance concerning new and emerging weapon technologies that could threaten the security of generations to come ("Disarmament for future generations"). Furthermore, the Board was impressed by the Agenda's vision and realism, with its near-term message of preserving and improving what exists, and by its long-term vision of disarmament.

9. Although the Agenda was an initiative of the Secretary-General, rather than a product of intergovernmental processes, the Board recognized and upheld the added value of the Agenda in the linkages and references it made to other intergovernmental agendas and priorities, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals. The Board believed that such linkages were what made disarmament an integral part of the DNA of the work of the United Nations and relevant to every Member State.

10. The Board noted that the broad scope of the Agenda addressed the concerns of all States, no matter their disarmament and non-proliferation priorities.

11. The Board wished to stress that it was incumbent on all stakeholders to actively promote the Agenda for Disarmament, and urged all Member States to take ownership of the Agenda. The Board stressed the need for greater outreach efforts to raise awareness of the Agenda and its call to action among Member States, the expert community, civil society and the broader public. To further those aims, the Board made the following recommendations.

Key points and recommendations

(a) The Secretary-General and his senior staff are encouraged to reach out to Member States through their respective permanent missions in New York, Geneva and Vienna, and engage with their capitals, including their ministries of defence, foreign affairs and finance and other relevant national institutions;

(b) The Agenda for Disarmament should be discussed during the general debate at the start of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General should be encouraged to mention the Agenda in his address to the General Assembly;

(c) Heads of State and Government should be encouraged to refer to the Agenda in their remarks to the General Assembly;

(d) The Chair of the Board should bring the Agenda to the attention of the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the First Committee and encourage them to ensure that it receives adequate consideration;

(e) Opportunities for the Secretary-General to set out the Agenda in various regions across the world should be utilized;

(f) A "friends of disarmament" network could be created as a possible means to advance the implementation of the Agenda;

(g) Opinion pieces supportive of one or more parts of the Agenda could be published under the authorship of one or more members of the Board or a group of mobilizers or champions;

(h) The Agenda should be emphasized in the introduction to and in section six of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization, which is mandated by Article 98 of the Charter of the United Nations;

(i) A mapping exercise should be undertaken to determine the potential role of each United Nations entity in advancing certain parts of the Agenda, such as the role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in engaging women and girls in the work of the Agenda;

(j) Tailored messages should be developed that explain the unique benefits to particular Member States of effective actions across the main areas of the Agenda. Through the implementation of the Agenda, its added value for Member States should be demonstrated over time, thereby strengthening their support for it;

(k) The Agenda should be presented as an action-oriented programme linked to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(l) An abridged version of the Agenda, possibly in the form of an easy-to-read, jargon-free summary, should be made available on the main homepage of the United Nations website;

(m) The Agenda should be translated into all six official United Nations languages, provided resources are available, and copies of the Agenda should be distributed to all Member States prior to the start of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly;

(n) The Organization should capitalize on significant anniversaries to sustain momentum for the Agenda, such as the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

1. Disarmament to save humanity: weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons

Conceptual framework

12. The Board reaffirmed that nuclear weapons posed a continuing existential threat to the world. States must work together to take specific and irreversible steps to prepare for a world free of nuclear weapons. That includes reinvigorating global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes, making the nuclear test ban permanent, developing approaches for nuclear disarmament verification, and ending the production of fissile material for use in weapons.

13. The Board further affirmed the need to halt the use of chemical weapons by ensuring accountability and ending impunity. It also noted the need to strengthen the institutional framework with respect to biological weapons, in particular the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, to prevent any use of such weapons and to be ready to mount a response if prevention failed.

14. At the same time, the Board highlighted that preventing the emergence and potential deployment of new and destabilizing strategic weapons, including in outer space, remained vital for the preservation of international stability.

Institutional architecture

15. In an environment of growing international tensions and insecurities, as described in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, the Board agreed that an immediate priority was to preserve the existing bilateral, multiparty and multilateral arms control and disarmament framework, which included key elements such as the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms; the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles; and the Conference on Disarmament. There appeared to be general consensus that the current framework was under considerable stress.

16. The Board reaffirmed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Board repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring the success of the upcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, believing it to be a priority for all States parties, and welcomed the readiness of the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to contribute to that goal.

17. In that regard, the Board reiterated the call contained in the Agenda for past commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be honoured. It suggested that one outcome of the 2020 Review Conference could be the identification of priority actions to be achieved during the period between the 2020 and 2025 Review Conferences.

18. The Board agreed that it was important for the 2020 Review Conference to find ways to make progress towards the repeatedly affirmed goal of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

19. The Board emphasized that, while the Secretary-General had an important role to play, States, in particular nuclear weapons possessors, should work towards an improved political environment and renewed constructive engagement and dialogue. In order to achieve success at the 2020 Review Conference and move forward on all areas of the Agenda, States must get back into the habit of cooperating with one another. The readiness of the Secretary-General to encourage dialogue to that end was highlighted during the Board's discussions.

20. The Board recalled that the Security Council had unanimously endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in its resolution 2231 (2015). During the Board's discussions, it was emphasized that the Plan of Action was a major achievement in nuclear non-proliferation and diplomacy and that every effort should be made to abide by its commitments.

21. The Board welcomed the holding of a summit in Singapore on 12 June 2018 between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and was encouraged by the commitment made to work towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

22. The Board agreed with the Secretary-General's emphasis on preserving the practice and norm of non-use and non-testing of nuclear weapons. Even if preserving the existing arms control and disarmament framework is the most immediate challenge, the Board supported the Agenda's emphasis on extending that framework to include new threats and new tools in the arms control toolbox.

23. On the issue of chemical and biological weapons, the Board recognized the importance of restoring the norm against the use of chemical weapons. The need to restore trust in multilateral institutions was seen as an important challenge to the agreed international framework.

24. In that regard, the Board welcomed the action points contained in the Agenda. It supported the idea of strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction through the establishment of a mechanism to investigate alleged use.

25. Given the wide scope of the issues at hand, the Board only had time to focus on a limited number of specific key areas that it thought could benefit from further deliberation and recommendations. Lack of mention of other areas in its report should not be seen as a judgment on the importance of such areas.

Key points and recommendations

26. **In helping to bring the international community back to a common vision and path towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Board welcomed the commitment expressed by the Secretary-General in his Agenda to engage in quiet dialogue to gain the support of Member States for the Agenda and to advance its objectives.**

27. **The Board also welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis in the Agenda on increasing his efforts to facilitate critical dialogue among Member States, including through the possible creation of new informal platforms or the use of existing forums to generate new ideas.**

28. **In the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Board highlighted the need for States to move away from their present habits of confrontation towards habits of cooperation, first by identifying specific areas in which cooperation could be cultivated and expanded over time and then moving to include more contentious issues.**

29. **The Board discussed with particular interest the Secretary-General's proposed two-track approach of persistent track 1.5 diplomacy and the establishment of a wider Helsinki-like process in the Middle East to build confidence. In his remarks to the Board, the Secretary-General highlighted the potential benefit of a broader confidence-building strategy that could begin with issues more suitable for agreement and lead to greater congruence on more sensitive topics.**

30. **The Board recommended that the Secretary-General could highlight to Member States the importance of pursuing efforts to preserve and resume their bilateral arms control processes. The Secretary-General would be well placed to encourage the rebuilding of cooperation among States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.**

31. **In its discussion of the importance of strengthened dialogue on nuclear matters, including reducing the risk of use of nuclear weapons, and in the light of the Secretary-General's readiness to encourage such dialogue, the Board proposed for consideration the following model of three "concentric circles" for enhanced dialogue:**

(a) **The first, innermost circle would be dialogue (official as well as track 1.5) among all the nuclear-weapon States, including on doctrines and concepts related to nuclear weapons. That could be separate from dialogue limited to the five permanent members of the Security Council. Possible**

platforms could include informal State-level discussions on the margins of the Conference on Disarmament, a track 1.5 process, perhaps associated with UNIDIR, or a thematic dialogue in the Security Council;

(b) The next circle would be that of all States that rely on nuclear weapons for their security. Such discussions could be conducted through an expanded track 1.5 dialogue, potentially steered by UNIDIR with extrabudgetary resources;

(c) The final, outermost circle would be among all stakeholders, including non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, through discussions within the various pillars of the disarmament machinery, as well as at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The discussions within the United Nations system could be led by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (New York and Geneva), with substantive support from UNIDIR. In all three circles, engagement and support could be provided by the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

32. The Board agreed on the importance of nuclear risk reduction activities, as emphasized in the Agenda. Nuclear risk reduction would serve the interests of all Member States. At the same time, the Board stressed that nuclear risk reduction, including sustaining the norm and practice of non-use, had to be addressed within the wider context of the pursuit of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

33. The Board discussed what actions could constitute possible risk reduction measures, such as no nuclear threat-making, restraints in nuclear doctrines, reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in national security strategies, initiatives to prevent accidental use, measures for the de-escalation of conflict and adopting a non-first use policy.

34. The Board highlighted the need to address the implications of new cyber and artificial intelligence technologies for nuclear risk reduction. It recommended that the role of emerging technologies in verification and monitoring of disarmament commitments should be further examined. The Board supported the Secretary-General's call for UNIDIR to identify further risk reduction measures.

35. The Board proposed that the Secretary-General be encouraged to support efforts by Member States to discuss the reinforcement of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

36. A proposal could be put forward to strengthen the institutional framework with respect to biological weapons by creating a response capacity in the event of a biological attack. While upholding the authority of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, that effort could be led by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which has a branch in Geneva, where the Convention's Implementation Support Unit is based and where discussions related to the Convention take place.

2. Disarmament that saves lives

Conceptual framework

37. The Board recognized the characterization by many that conventional weapons, which result in vast destruction and massive loss of life, are the "real weapons of mass destruction". Armed conflicts are becoming more deadly, destructive and complex, not only because of the overaccumulation and wide availability of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, but also because of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and improvised explosive devices, as well as the emergence of new technologies, such as armed drones. The Board agreed with the assessment by the Secretary-General that such weapons could exacerbate economic losses, displace civilian populations, cripple critical infrastructure and result in environmental contamination, ultimately impeding the Sustainable Development Goals.

38. The Board welcomed the assessment by the Secretary-General in his Agenda that international approaches to regulate arms needed to be brought into line with the magnitude of those problems and integrated into broader work for prevention and sustainable development. Furthermore, it supported the findings that new approaches were required for supporting action at the country level to end the illicit trade in small arms and their ammunition, that enhanced implementation of measures for the security and physical protection of excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles was needed, and that renewed cooperation and dialogue were required to reduce military spending and build confidence among States.

39. The Board considered the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas, a major matter of concern raised in the Agenda. Weapons designed for use in open battlefields (such as artillery, rockets and mortars, large air-dropped bombs and surface-to-surface ballistic missiles) had a devastating effect on civilian populations and infrastructure, and had become a staggering humanitarian problem. The Board noted that, despite restraints proscribed by international humanitarian law, the impact of explosive weapons on civilians had grown substantially.

40. The Board discussed the gendered impact of arms, including the fact that weapons had a differentiated impact on women, men, boys and girls and that women were more frequently victims of gender-based violence facilitated by small arms, including domestic and sexual violence.

41. Data collection has been undertaken in the context of United Nations missions, with a view to minimizing civilian harm. Civilian tracking to date does not follow a rigorous scientific or analytical methodology, but it does provide a growing picture of the impact of weapons on civilians. In that context, the Board examined the need for a more standardized collection methodology and noted that such a step could lead to improved data and quality of information, regardless of location or the individuals undertaking the task. The Board cautioned that there was a need to ensure the protection of collected data, which could be sensitive in nature and prove a tool for malicious ends if placed in the wrong hands.

42. The Board also studied the issue of improvised explosive devices, which presented a daunting challenge because of the breadth of the issue, the wide array of actors and the ease with which the materials to make such devices could be acquired. The Board noted that improvised explosive devices were not a category of weapon controlled by Governments, which effectively precluded the normal array of arms control measures from being called upon. The most significant obstacle to putting in place a new legal framework to regulate improvised explosive devices was the intrinsic nature of the weapon itself. Efforts to address improvised explosive devices

should be holistic and part of comprehensive prevention and conflict resolution measures.

43. The Board noted that the technology and materials used to make improvised explosive devices were constantly evolving. On the issue of precursors, an additional challenge was that the chemicals were often easily available and dual-use in nature.

Institutional architecture

44. The Board noted that improvised explosive devices had a deleterious impact on many United Nations priorities, causing significant economic damage and harm to critical infrastructure, displacing populations and contaminating the environment. The point was made that since any country could be impacted by terrorists using improvised explosive devices, there was a strong incentive for every Member State to be involved in addressing the issue. That called for greater coherence in the approaches taken both by the United Nations and Member States. **The Board drew attention to and encouraged the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/36 entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", in which the Assembly called for enhanced cooperation and the sharing of information on good practices in order to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.**

45. The Board welcomed the adoption of the outcome document of the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York from 18 to 29 June 2018.

46. The Board highlighted the importance of convincing government agencies to treat small arms and light weapons not only as a security issue, but also as an impediment to sustainable development. Particular importance was given to involving agencies related to finance, defence, internal affairs and development in the same discussions as the funders that were supporting such activities.

47. The Board welcomed the coordination efforts of the United Nations through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism. **It recommended that more could be done, including through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, to replicate existing best practices in various States and regions.**

48. The Board discussed the Secretary-General's intention, as part of the new Agenda for Disarmament, to establish a funding facility within the Peacebuilding Fund, open to United Nations system partners and external stakeholders, that would support comprehensive approaches to small arms regulation and control in selected States. The funding facility would enable Governments to undertake coordinated implementation of a wide range of measures under a single programme composed of mutually reinforcing components to address the various facets of the small arms problem in their countries. The facility would thus be a solid, innovative, participatory application of the increasingly accepted idea that arms regulation and development must be approached in an integrated manner.

49. The Board was encouraged that more States were integrating Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security within their national action plans on addressing small arms and light weapons, and that a network of women, peace and security national focal points had been established. The Board wished to highlight the key role that women had played in policymaking in the context of disarmament and arms control.

Key points and recommendations

50. **The Board encouraged further implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/36, in which the Assembly called for enhanced cooperation and the sharing of information on good practices in order to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.**

51. **The Board recommended that more could be done to replicate existing best practices found in various States and regions, including through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism.**

52. **The Board suggested that the Secretary-General consider supporting a summit-level dialogue, along the lines of the Nuclear Security Summit, to further the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Board felt that such a summit could raise awareness of the extent of the problem posed by small arms and encourage stepped-up efforts to counter the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons.**

53. **The Board strongly endorsed the steps being taken by the Secretary-General to establish a funding facility within the Peacebuilding Fund to help States to take a comprehensive and programmatic approach to addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons. The Board welcomed the suggestion to pilot the facility in a limited number of States and, once it had been shown to be a success, bolster the Peacebuilding Fund and system capacity to support country-level efforts**

54. **The Board recommended that the regional economic commissions be brought into play in advancing the implementation of the Agenda.**

3. Disarmament for future generations: emerging means and methods of warfare

Conceptual framework

55. The Board deliberated on emerging means and methods of warfare, noting that, while technology provided overwhelming benefits, new technologies in the area of weapons posed challenges to existing legal, humanitarian and ethical norms, non-proliferation, international stability and peace and security. Furthermore, in the face of the growing automation of weaponry, new measures were necessary to ensure that humans always maintained control over the use of force. A culture of accountability and adherence to norms, rules and principles needed to be fostered to ensure responsible behaviour in cyberspace, and additional steps needed to be taken to encourage responsible innovation by industry, engineers and scientists.

56. The Board considered the implementation of the action point contained in the Agenda on encouraging responsible innovation of science and technology, to ensure its application for peaceful purposes, as well as the responsible dissemination of knowledge, in conformity with the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

57. It noted that in 1975 the General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind (Assembly resolution 30/3384 XXX), which proclaimed that all States "shall promote international cooperation to ensure that the results of scientific and technological developments are used in the interests of strengthening international peace and security, freedom and independence, and also for the purpose of the economic and social development of peoples and the realization of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations".

58. The Board drew attention to the fact that "responsible innovation of science and technology" was a very broad concept and noted that responsible innovation could have different implications depending on the area of technology in question.

59. The Board acknowledged that cultivating a culture of responsible innovation as part of an overall sense of ethical behaviour should begin at an early age. In that connection, it recommended exploring linkages with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

60. The Board believed that the Agenda should also be part of the wider discussion of artificial intelligence. It should be discussed at science and technology forums, both at Headquarters and in the field, within and outside the United Nations. An important resource to promote the Agenda in all parts of the world would be through the involvement of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament.

61. The Board also considered action points in the Agenda related to ensuring peace and stability in cyberspace. It welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General was making available his good offices to contribute to the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflict stemming from malicious activity in cyberspace.

Institutional architecture

62. The Board noted with satisfaction that the recommendation contained in its previous report endorsing the idea of the United Nations becoming the key norm entrepreneur in the cyberrealm had been taken up by the Office for Disarmament Affairs through its development, with the support of the Government of Singapore, of an online training course and norms implementation toolkit. The training course and toolkit were based on the assessments and recommendations contained in the reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and will be launched at a meeting of the First Committee during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

63. While fully supporting the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in connection with the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Board discussed the idea that the Secretary-General could consider supporting a track 1.5 discussion on the topic of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Key points and recommendations

64. **The Board proposed that the Secretary-General consider supporting a track 1.5 discussion involving industry on an exchange of national experiences in regulating emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and autonomous systems and more specifically human-machine interaction. The discussion should explore the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law to clearly establish the human line of accountability for the use of lethal force. UNIDIR could play a key role in supporting multilateral efforts and conducting independent research to enlighten and inform the debates going forward.**

65. **In that connection, the Board also recommended involving and mobilizing young entrepreneurs, particularly those involved in scientific and technological advancements.**

66. **The Board further recommended that engagement with the private sector should include discussions on innovative approaches to technology, particularly**

to mitigate the opacity in the implementation of machine-learning algorithms and other technologies.

67. **The Office for Disarmament Affairs should undertake further work to support States in their implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.**

4. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament

68. As stated in the Agenda for Disarmament, disarmament initiatives have been most successful when they have involved effective partnerships among Governments, the expert community and civil society. The existing multilateral disarmament institutions need to be reinvigorated and better utilized, both through increased political will and by improving coordination and integration of expertise into their work.

69. In the Agenda, the Secretary-General notes that the United Nations and regional organizations should work together to strengthen existing platforms for regional dialogue on security and arms control. Greater efforts are needed to achieve the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes, which, as the Secretary-General points out, is a moral duty and an operational necessity. More education and training opportunities should be provided to empower young people to be a force for change and disarmament. Lastly, there must be better engagement and integration of experts and representatives of industry and civil society into United Nations efforts for disarmament.

70. With regard to strengthening partnerships for disarmament, the Board discussed the importance of moving away from tokenism. Women, young people and representatives of community-based conflict resolution networks and the private sector, among others, must be brought to the table. The Board called for such groups to be involved in a more practical manner, by empowering them to take concrete follow-up actions in their areas of work and through stronger and more influential activism on the ground.

71. The Board noted that the absence of political will in the field of disarmament was one of the factors that made disarmament difficult, irrespective of the forums that existed to discuss the matter.

72. In terms of its own ability to be more strategic in its contributions to the efforts of the Secretary-General and the implementation of the Agenda for Disarmament, the Board explored a number of possible actions that could be taken by individual members or the Board as a whole.

Key points and recommendations

73. **The Board considered that mobilizing young people was an opportunity that should not be missed. Involving and connecting with existing youth networks, organizations, associations of young diplomats and other groups would enable more fruitful exchanges of ideas and knowledge. The possibility of inviting young people to participate in consultations and processes should be considered. The Board also encouraged the provision of further financial assistance to facilitate the participation of representatives from developing countries at meetings of the United Nations.**

74. **The Board highlighted the significance of disarmament education, engaging students at all levels through online courses and inviting young experts to participate in competitions or write essays on disarmament issues. University**

students should be encouraged to discuss the points raised in the Agenda and brainstorm new solutions to current disarmament negotiation challenges.

75. **The Board also highlighted the significance of bringing UN-Women on board in order to connect with women's organizations involved in disarmament issues.**

76. **The Board noted that the United Nations Global Colloquium of University Presidents was an opportunity to disseminate and discuss major policy initiatives of the United Nations. In 2016, the Colloquium had discussed the preservation of cultural heritage. It was recommended that the United Nations consider making the Agenda for Disarmament a topic for a future Colloquium. The presence of the Secretary-General at the Colloquium was specifically highlighted.**

77. **The Board welcomed the suggestion to strengthen its strategic role in all disarmament processes and deliberations. The agreed-upon vision and messages should be communicated more actively to disarmament bodies and forums within and outside the United Nations framework. That could contribute to identifying strategic and emerging disarmament priorities and advising the Secretary-General accordingly and in a timely manner. The possibility of creating subcommittees in which members of the Board would cover specific areas of disarmament was also considered.**

78. **The Board also emphasized and recommended that regional organizations could play a key role in the implementation of the Agenda.**

79. **The Board highlighted the significant advantage of working with the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and other entities within and outside the disarmament machinery. The Board considered that the exchanges of its members with other disarmament bodies, where feasible, could assist in its work in studying issues and making recommendations.**

III. Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

80. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, acting in its role as the Board of Trustees for UNIDIR, met twice in 2018, on 23 January in Geneva and on 26 June in New York.

81. At its meeting in January, the Board welcomed a new Chair and nine new members. That provided an opportunity for UNIDIR to introduce the members of the Board to its work and operating model. The Deputy Director gave a comprehensive briefing on the current status and activities of the Institute. The members of the Board provided comments and advice on UNIDIR research and activities, expressed their appreciation for the Institute's gender policy and encouraged it to establish a monitoring and evaluations policy.

82. The Deputy Director also provided an update on administrative and financial issues and an overview of the recent funding trends, highlighting in particular the relative decrease in unearmarked contributions to the institutional operations budget and the commensurate increase in earmarked project funding.

83. The Board welcomed the nomination of a new Director by the Secretary-General and looked forward to her taking up her functions in due course. They expressed their appreciation for the outgoing Director, Jarmo Sareva, and his work in achieving greater institutional and financial stability for UNIDIR.

84. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs also addressed the Board. She emphasized her support for UNIDIR and the role that UNIDIR could play in elaborating and supporting the implementation of an agenda for disarmament.

85. At its meeting in June, the Board considered the new Director's strategic objectives and priorities for 2018–2020, the findings of the independent third-party assessment and the annual report of the Director. Board members were also provided with copies of the Institute's new monitoring and evaluation policy.

86. The Board welcomed and endorsed the Director's vision for the Institute as a responsive provider of knowledge, information, dialogue and policy advice to Member States, the disarmament expert community and United Nations entities. In particular, the Board welcomed the emphasis that UNIDIR was placing on contributing to the implementation of the Agenda for Disarmament, given the document's significance. Noting that the Agenda assigned specific roles to UNIDIR, the Board encouraged the Institute to be fully engaged in system-wide efforts to take the Agenda forward. The Board also welcomed the emphasis on enhancing linkages between the goals of disarmament, prevention and sustainable development in the work of the Institute and collaboration at the country and regional level, where appropriate. The members of the Board supported the Institute's commitment to increasing outreach and visibility, and encouraged the Institute to engage with more partners and more activities beyond Europe, where financially feasible.

87. The Board acknowledged with appreciation the breadth of the Institute's research programme and its commitment to maintaining the capacity to engage with conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction as well as new technologies. In particular, the Board welcomed the increased emphasis and cross-cutting work on urban violence, gender and reducing the risk of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the focus on identifying and supporting areas of common ground in the context of weapons of mass destruction. The Board encouraged efforts by UNIDIR to document efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It also welcomed the Institute's commitment to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue, in particular on the implications of new technologies. The Board looked forward to discussing specific research programmes in more detail at its next meeting.

88. The Board approved the report of the Director of UNIDIR on the activities of the Institute for the period from January 2017 to May 2018 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2018 and 2019 (A/73/256). The Board considered the report of the independent third-party assessment outlining a sustainable and stable funding structure and operating model as required to achieve the mandate and objectives of the Institute, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 70/69. The Board took note of the professional and comprehensive nature of the assessment and endorsed the overall findings. In the view of the Board, the assessment confirmed the Board's longstanding position on the importance of UNIDIR having adequate operating capacity and resources to carry out its mandate in a sustainable, impartial and inclusive manner. The Board underscored the timely nature of the assessment in the context of the launch of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the new UNIDIR management.

89. The Board recalled that, as discussed at its meeting in January, it had consistently recommended a subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations, as well as an increase.[1] While a subvention had continued to be granted, it

[1] As early as 1983, the Board "expressed concern" at the Institute's financial situation. It agreed that "to the extent possible, the funds needed for the employment of a permanent staff should be absorbed by the regular budget of the United Nations" (A/38/467, para. 21). Nearly every subsequent annual report of the Board notes the significant fundraising efforts of the Director and the staff and expresses concern at the inadequacy of voluntary contributions for covering institutional costs.

had not kept up with the Institute's staffing costs: the current subvention did not cover the D-2 position of the Director. The Board noted that a significant portion of the Institute's outputs, such as the information and knowledge support and policy advice it provides to States, were public goods, and not discrete projects for which it received dedicated funding.

90. The Board underscored that stable and predictable institutional funding was fundamental for the Institute's strategic planning and capacity to provide advice and support to all States. In that regard, it expressed its disappointment at the fact that, despite the consensus recommendation contained in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 70/69, the Board's robust endorsement, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and its inclusion in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 2018–2019, an exceptional, one-off increase in the subvention for the biennium 2018–2019 had not been approved.

91. In the light of increased Member State reliance on UNIDIR support, the Board strongly endorsed the view contained in the independent third-party assessment on the importance of increased regular budget support towards meeting the costs of the Director and the staff of the Institute, and called on Member States to endorse such an increase in the programme budget for 2020–2021.

92. The Board of Trustees looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General, to be presented at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, on a sustainable and stable funding structure and operating model to achieve the mandate and objectives of the Institute and entreats Member States to support the recommendations contained therein. The Board will engage relevant General Assembly bodies during the seventy-third session on the need for sustainable funding arrangements for UNIDIR.

93. Mindful of the unique value and expertise that UNIDIR offers Member States and the international community, as well as the role envisaged for UNIDIR to contribute actively to the implementation of the Agenda for Disarmament, the Board requests the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to continue to provide the requisite administrative and logistical support, in particular accommodation within the Palais des Nations in Geneva, so as to enable UNIDIR to remain fully embedded within the United Nations disarmament machinery.

IV. Future work and other matters

94. With respect to future work, and further to its discussion on strengthening the Board's strategic role in disarmament processes and deliberations, the Board suggested carrying out a mapping exercise of its members to determine their specific areas of expertise and what networks they belonged to. Such an activity could improve advocacy efforts, especially with respect to promoting and furthering the Agenda for Disarmament.

95. The Board considered meeting more than just twice a year, including through virtual meetings held on an ongoing basis during the intersessional period. That was deemed important for making gains and following up on progress made towards the implementation of the Agenda.

96. The Board proposed that the Secretariat brief the members of the Board on the recommendations made during previous sessions, informing them of which ones had been implemented.

Annex

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters 2018

Vladimir Drobnjak (Chair)
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations
New York

Joanne Adamson
Ambassador
Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations
New York

Setsuko Aoki
Professor of Law, Keio University
Tokyo

Selma Ashipala-Musavyi
Ambassador
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia
Windhoek

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Research Fellow
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Lucia Dammert
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Universidad de Santiago de Chile
Santiago

Lewis A. Dunn
Former United States Ambassador to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Virginia, United States of America

Fu Cong
Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs
Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva
Geneva

Amandeep Gill
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva

Steffen Kongstad
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Norway to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
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Merel Noorman
Assistant Professor
Tilburg University
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Enkhtsetseg Ochir
Director-General for Multilateral Cooperation
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Vladimir Orlov
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Abiodun Williams
Director of the Institute for Global Leadership and Professor of the Practice of International Politics, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
Medford, United States of America

Motaz Zahran
Ambassador
Embassy of Egypt
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Renata Dwan (ex officio)
Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
Geneva